

District Development Grant Guidelines

Background: The 47th Legislature provided to Montana conservation districts one half of one percent of the coal severance tax monies for use for any purpose that they are authorized to perform pursuant to [MCA, Title 76, Chapter 15, Part 4](#).

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Conservation Resource Development Division (CARDD) offers the District development grant to conservation districts to increase the conservation district's ability to meet statutory requirements for developing and implementing locally led conservation projects.

DNRC provides fiscal management of the grant programs while the [Resource Conservation Advisory Council \(RCAC\)](#) review applications and provides recommendations for funding to the DNRC Conservation Districts Bureau (CDB) Program Manager. DNRC may incur up to 10% of the yearly appropriation for administration of the program.

RCAC has set aside \$50,000/year for FY2022 and FY2023 for this program.

Applicant Eligibility

District Development grants are available to Montana conservation districts and its employees for any projects under its authority.

Grant Types and Limits:

The District Development grant funds are to increase conservation district employee's hours. Funds may be used for:

- Planning
- Secure other funding
- Implement programs that improve public outreach and conservation plans
- Increase administrative capabilities

PROJECTS: Funds may be used to cover the costs of conservation district employee(s) salary, travel expenses, or supplies implementing any project a conservation district is authorized to carry out.

Examples of Projects: Planning and implementing new conservation projects or programs; organizing conservation district education and outreach efforts. Additionally, on the job training to gain expertise in administrative capabilities such as QuickBooks, payroll, office organization, web design work, and others are activities that are covered through this grant.

The highest priority will be given to activities that lead to "on the ground conservation" projects.

FUNDING LIMITS: Grants may be awarded for up to **\$10,000** depending on available funding, the intended activities, and based on a budget that is supported by a clear scope of work. The District Development grant program had been designed as a short-term solution to assist conservation district build needed capacity for projects. Applicants are encouraged to explore long-term solutions to build additional capacity and/or to address resource concerns identified by the conservation district.

Guidelines

Eligibility: To be eligible to receive a District development grant, a conservation district must:

1. Have levied the maximum county mills allowed for the current fiscal year
2. Have or in the process of developing a special project as authorized in MCA, Title 76, Chapter 15, Part 4
3. Have a need for additional funds above the maximum statutory authority
4. Provide a copy of the conservation district's annual plan
5. Submit an annual budget. Administrative grant applications may serve this purpose, however, for those conservation districts that do not apply for or receive an administrative grant must submit an annual budget prior to receiving grant funds.
6. All previous grants received by the applicant must be current (i.e. all reports filed) before any new grant funds can be released.
7. The chairperson of the conservation district must sign the application form. Mail a signed original copy and an electronic Word Document of the application must be submitted by the posted deadline.

PLANS:

- Must include a plan to monitor the effectiveness of the project
- Must include a plan for public outreach and educational efforts

BUDGET:

- Provide a detailed budget indicating how the grant funds will be used.
- Include money or in-kind services from other sources (if applicable)

Ineligible Costs

- Activities outside of the scope of work
- Costs incurred outside of the contract term

MEPA:

- Fill out the supplemental checklist if a project is expected to have some environmental impact.

Examples of Environmental Impacts: Projects that include but are not limited to any stream restoration activities, chemical applications and/or treatments for weeds, complete changes to irrigation lines or infrastructure.

Ineligible Applications:

- Submitted after the deadline due date
- Submitted without approval at a conservation district board meeting
- Submitted without the signature of the conservation district board Chairperson or designate
- Incomplete application